



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL
INSPECTIONS**

**KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 372
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
<http://sbc.lacounty.gov>**

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (15-2373)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chairperson Eleanor R. Montañó, Commissioner Donald S. Andrews, Commissioner Johanna Arias-Bhatia, Commissioner Barbara Bigby, Commissioner Susan Burton, Commissioner Percy Duran, III, Commissioner Cheryl Grills Ph.D. and Commissioner Theresa Zhen

Excused: Commissioner Anne S. Hill

Staff Present: Bolaji Famuyiwa and Roy Sinclair. (15-2374)

Call to Order. (15-2259)

Chairperson Montañó called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Montañó led in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

Self-introductions were made by all in attendance.

Chairperson Montañó welcomed newly appointed Commissioners Percy Duran III (First Supervisorial District) and Theresa Zhen (Third Supervisorial District) who in turn provided brief overviews of their backgrounds.

Commissioner Duran III stated that he served as Chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Advisory Board under the Obama and Bush Administrations, he's President of the Youth Policy Institute, former Director of the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic, former Director of the Mexican American Legal Defense League, and member of

the Braille Institute, former President of the Board of Public Works and has been practicing law for over thirty years.

Commissioner Zhen stated that she currently works as an attorney with A New Way of Life Reentry Project in Los Angeles. She is a recent graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She completed her undergraduate studies at Stanford University and previously worked as a Legal Assistant working on wrongful conviction cases.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER

1. Approval of the May 13, 2015 Minutes. (15-2260)

On motion of Donald S. Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Barbara Bigby, unanimously carried, this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

2. Department of Auditor-Controller (AC). (15-2261)

Ms. Michele Day, AC, Group Home Ombudsman, welcomed the new SBC Commissioners and provided an overview of her activities with the SBC. She also distributed copies and reported on the Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report during the month of April 2015:

There were a total of 19 Hotline Requests for Assistance Calls:

- 17 Youth callers
- 2 Adult callers

Joint Visits/Outreach with Probation Ombudsman

- Eggleston Youth Center (8 sites)
- Fred Jefferson Memorial (2 sites)
- Project Six

She concluded by reporting that a total of 11 outreach visits were made during the month on April 2015.

3. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). (15-2262)

Patricia Bolanos-Gonzalez, Children Services Administrator II, Out-of-Home Care Management Division, DCFS, reported that during the month of April 2015 there were a total of 882 Absent Without Leave (AWOL) and the child abuse hotline received a total of 25 referrals in the following categories:

April 2015 referrals

- **1 Caretaker Absent**
- **2 Emotional Abuse**
- **5 General Neglect**
- **8 Sexual Abuse**
- **9 Physical Abuse**

During the same reporting period 33 referrals were closed in the following categories:

- **1 Emotional Abuse**
- **13 General Neglect**
- **11 Physical Abuse**
- **8 Sexual Abuse**

During the same reporting period 34 referrals were closed for the following reasons:

- **7 Inconclusive**
- **8 Evaluated Out**
- **19 unfounded**

Commissioner Grills inquired if there is any policy in place to address youth who are chronically AWOL and how does the group home handle AWOLs.

Ms. Bolanos-Gonzalez reported that the policy for handling AWOLs varies by group homes or agencies. Some group homes are more lenient than others when reporting these incidents. The group home staff tries to deter the youth from leaving and if the youth leave they are de-briefed upon their return. Her staff then tries to ascertain the reasons why the youth AWOLed and how to assist in preventing the youth from future incidents.

Diana Flaggs, Section Manager, Contract and Fiscal Compliance, DCFS, added that some group homes program statement indicate that they accept children with a history of AWOL and they have policies to address or reduce the number of incidents.

- 4. Internal Services Department (ISD). (15-2263)**

There was no report presented, however Mr. Lear answered questions posed by the Commission.

- 5. Department of Mental Health (DMH). (15-2264)**

Ms. Zoe Trachtenberg, LCSW, Program Director, DMH, provided an overview of her role with DMH and the SBC. She also provided a follow-up to Commissioner Andrews' inquiry during the April 15, 2015 SBC Business meeting regarding "Laura's Law". She reported that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on November 25, 2014 approved Item No. 13, authorizing the full implementation of Assembly Bill 1421 "Laura Law" in Los Angeles County. She also reported that Los Angeles County has awarded contracts to 19 agencies to provide mental health services to individuals who suffer from mental health issues.

She further reported that Laura's Law brings to the forefront issues of individuals suffering from mental health illnesses and who are not seeking help and it also empowers the Judges with judicial leverage to encourage these individuals to seek help because they may benefit from mental health services.

Commissioner Grills inquired regarding the need for DMH, PD and DCFS to collaborate in providing mental health services to group homes contracting with the County of Los Angeles.

Ms. Zoe Trachtenberg stated that currently DMH is in discussion with DCFS and PD regarding possible collaborations. DMH and the PD is jointly working on the Van Horn Project, a Rate Classification Level 14 (RCL 14) group home that various counties will utilize to provide higher level of care for youth with severe mental health issues, specialized and other needs.

6. Probation Department (PD). (15-2265)

Mr. Michael Varela, Director of Camp Gonzales and Dorothy Kirby Center, reported that all Probation camps will be going through a State Board of Corrections audit. He also reported that camp population is low at the moment which allows the camps to have more programs. The low population is a result of the department providing Wrap-Around Services to the youth.

He further reported that Camp Kirby is participating in an automotive program in collaboration with Los Angeles Trade Technical College and 18 youth have received credit for the course taken at the college and there are several other youth taking online courses at Los Angeles Mission College.

Additionally, he reported that Kirby Center hosted a High Tea gathering for mothers and beautician's event on May 15, 2015 and May 18, 2015, respectively. He also reported that Camp Gonzales participated in a Solar competition event in Temecula, CA.

Commissioner Andrews inquired on the current status of several probation camps.

Mr. Varela reported that Camps Holton, Scobbee and Routh are closed. Kilpatrick was demolished and is under construction.

Ms. Pamela Pease, Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Group Home Monitoring and Investigations Unit, Placement Services Bureau, PD, provided the monthly status report of group home AWOLs for the month of April 2015 as follows:

There were 127 AWOLs involving 101 Youth, 25 youth AWOLED more than once:

- 30 Remain AWOL**
- 44 Returned to group homes**
- 20 Placed in Juvenile Hall**
- 5 Camp Community Placement**
- 1 HOP**
- 1 DCFS**

During the same period, Ms. Pease also reported on the number of investigations as follows:

- 2 Child abuse
- 2 unfounded

There were 7 Group home investigations

- 1 substantiated, 1 unfounded, 5 pending

There were 3 follow up investigations

- 2 substantiated, 1 no finding

There were no group homes placed on hold for the month of April 2015.

Ms. Pease further reported that the final determination for Children Are Our Future and Touch A Life Foundation was April 30, 2015 and all probation youth were relocated to other group homes as of March 16, 2015.

Commissioner Grills expressed concern with her findings during her inspection of Community Youth Sports and Arts Foundation, where the youth are confined to their rooms as punishment for rule violation for 23 hours daily. The Commission requested the PD to look into the issue of solitary confinement.

Ms. Pease stated that she would look into the matter.

7. Sheriff's Department (SD). (15-2266)

Commander Ralph Ornelas, Custody Services Division, SD, provided a brief overview of his responsibilities with the SD. He also reported that he spoke with Homicide Detective Gary Sloan regarding the death of Sara Corliss in January of 2015, an inmate at Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF) and there's no update at this time. To date there is still no cause of death and the Coroner's Office is awaiting the toxicology report.

Commissioner Andrews inquired into the inmate Welfare fund.

Commander Ralph Ornelas stated that an independent board oversees the funds and all monies received from the commissary, inmate telephone etc., are used to fund programs such as the Education Based Incarceration (EBI) and Health Right 360. He also stated that he would contact Ms. Karen Dalton, Director of Custody Services, SD, and invite her to come to the June 17, 2015 Commission's Business Meeting and address in detail the source and use of the Inmate Welfare Fund.

Commissioner Arias-Bhatia inquired on the status of the tele-psychology program which is to be implemented in the Los Angeles County Jail system.

Commander Ornelas stated that the SD participates in the Tele-Medicine in conjunction with the DMH. However, the Tele-Psychology program is still in the discussion stage and has not been implemented yet.

The Commission thanked Commander Ornelas for his report.

III. COMMISSION REPORTS

8. Chairperson's Report on various items. (15-2267)

Chairperson Montaña shared the following Newspaper Article with the Commission:

Daily Breeze

- Program Will Train in Spotting Sex Trafficking (May 20, 2015)
- Tanaka Indicted in Jail Cover-Up (May 15, 2015)
- Rancho Palos Verdes Father Guilty in Girl's Cliff Death (May 14, 2015)

Los Angeles Times

- Oversight Panel Must Have Right to Subpoena (May 14, 2015 - Opinion)

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

9. Treasurer's Report. (15-2268)

The bank statement balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund remains at \$778.90.

10. Staff Report on Correspondence Received, and Department Representative Reports. (15-2269)

Staff reported that the SIP is scheduled for June 4, 2015 at L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles, CA. Commissioner Arias-Bhatia RSVPD to attend the event and staff also informed the Commission that DCFS provided a list of the group home corporate sites and reminded the newly appointed Commissioners to submit their bios and photo to be included on the website.

11. Review of Group Home Compliance Monitoring Audit Reports presented on May 20, 2015. (15-2270)

There was no report presented.

12. Commissioners' Reports on Group Home and/or Detention Facilities Inspections from May 14, 2015 to May 19, 2015. (15-2271)

During the reporting period, the following group homes/facilities were reported as being in satisfactory condition:

Chairperson Montaña and Commissioner Andrews visited

- **South Bay Bright Future Youth Center #2 (West 245th Street, Harbor City, CA) on May 19, 2015;**
- **Olive Crest Treatment Center (Cornuta Avenue, Bellflower, CA) on May 18, 2015; and**
- **Pacific Lodge (Serrania Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA) on May 15, 2015.**

Commissioner Bacio visited

- **East Los Angeles Superior Courthouse (East Civic Center Way, Los Angeles, CA) on May 19, 2015 and noted that the facility's evacuation plan is not posted in the Lock-up area; and**
- **East Los Angeles Sheriff's Station (East Third Street, Los Angeles, CA) on May 7, 2015.**

Commissioner Bigby visited

- **Rosemary Children's Services "Romberger House" (Fremont Avenue, South Pasadena, CA) on May 14, 2015 and noted that the carpet in Bedroom #3 needs to be cleaned and the closet drawers in Bedroom #4 need to be repaired.**

Commissioners Burton, Zhen and Grills visited

- **Community Youth Sports and Arts Foundation (Crenshaw Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA) on May 19, 2015 and reported the following findings:**
- **The dressers in Bedrooms #1, #2 and #3 need replacing; the bed posts in all the bedrooms need replacing; the ceiling light fixture in the bathroom needs to be repaired/replaced and the bathtub needs re-glazing; the kitchen cabinets need sanding/re-finishing and some of the cabinet drawers need replacing and the stove and microwave needs to be degreased.**

- **Staff was directed to fax a copy of the Corrective Action Plan to the facility's director Glenn Scott and report the findings to the Board of Supervisors.**

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

13. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) referred to staff or placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action came to the attention of the Committee subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (15-2272)

The following items were introduced for discussion and are to be placed on the June 3, 2015 agenda for Commission action:

- **Reports from the department representatives are to be submitted to the SBC at least a week prior to the Business meeting;**
- **Review of the SBC by-laws;**
- **Chairperson's inspection assignments for Commissioners are to be provided in a computerized document; and**
- **Duplication of SBC duties/services with DCFS, Probation and other agencies.**

Public Comment

14. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (15-2273)

There were no members of the public present to address the Commission.

Adjournment

15. Adjournment for the meeting of May 20, 2015. (15-2274)

There being no further business, Chairperson Montaña adjourned the meeting of May 20, 2015 at 12:52 p.m.